



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Health Care Quality and Cost Council
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JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Chair

KATHARINE LONDON
Executive Director

Health Care Quality and Cost Council

Minutes

July 18, 2007

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

21st Floor, One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Attendees: JudyAnn Bigby (Chair), Thomas Lee, Gregory Sullivan, Joseph Lawler, Christopher Delorey, Elizabeth Capstick, Katharine London, Charles Baker, Dolores Mitchell, David Friedman, James Conway

Judy Bigby called the meeting to order at 1:03.

I. Approval of Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of its meeting June 20, 2007.

II. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Katharine London made the following report to the Council.

- The final FY08 state budget includes a 1 million dollar line item for the Council. In addition, there is a 1.5 million surplus in the FY07 Health Reform Fund that will be PAC'd forward to FY08. The Council has requested that the unspent portion of the \$398K that was allocated to the Council from this fund in FY07 be allocated to the Council in FY08.
- Katharine introduced staff Jackie Dasilva, Policy Analyst; David Albright, Legal Intern. Katharine has started interviewing for the Project Manager Position.
- The HCQCC Website is up at www.mass.gov/healthcare. Jackie Dasilva is working closely with EOHHS' IT Division to add additional information. Please contact her if you have any questions or suggestions as we move forward with the website project.
- The Web Design and Communications RFP bidders conference took place this past Monday, July 16, at 2pm. There were 20 attendees and phone inquiries from Canada, California, and New York. Attendees showed interest in working with each other and spent time after conference communicating and exchanging contact information. The bidders conference attendance list is posted on www.Comm-Pass.com.
- The Council will hold a public hearing on regulation 129 CMR 1.00 Reporting System for Health Care Claims Datasets on August 7, 2007 at 1:00 PM at One Ashburton Place, 21st floor Boston. The record is open for written testimony until August 17, 2007. Members of the Advisory Committee may submit testimony until August 27, 2007.

- The Council co-sponsored a letter of intent together with a group of researchers in response to a Robert Wood Johnson Cost Solicitation entitled “2007 Special Topic Solicitation Health Care Costs: Research to Inform Policy.” Researchers David Blumenthal, Lisa Iezzoni, Joel Weissman, Michael Schwartz and Barbra Rabson proposed to identify variations in cost and practice patterns using the Council’s new claims database, and based on this information, to recommend to the Council specific opportunities to improve quality of care and reduce spending.
- The Council is participating in a new initiative called the Regional All-Payer Information Initiative (RAPII) along with representatives from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The goals of this group include standardizing the datasets being developed by each state and sharing data, analysis, and lessons learned.
- Katharine sent a letter to every legislator highlighting the Council’s goals for the Commonwealth. The letter also highlights the Council’s vision in achieving the highest levels of performance in health care by 2012.
- Jim Conway presented a summary of the Partnership for Health Excellence project and discussed benefits of possibly working with the organization in targeting consumers. The organization is bringing different players in the health care industry together to help consumers understand the variation in quality of care and help consumers to be more active in obtaining high quality healthcare services. The Partnership plans to initiate an extensive multimedia campaign beginning this fall. BCBSMA is providing initial funding. The Council agreed to participate in the Leadership Council for this organization, and to encourage the Partnership to focus efforts on supporting the statewide goals established by the Council.

III. Items for Discussion

A. Approval of Request for Proposals for a Health Care Claims Data Manager

The Council unanimously approved issuing the Request for Proposals for a Health Care Claims Data Manager.

B. Developing a strategy to engage key constituents around the Massachusetts Statewide Quality and Cost Goals

The Council agreed that it is important to develop a strategy to engage key constituents around the Massachusetts Statewide Quality and Cost Goals. Judy Bigby recommended that a list of key constituents be developed and that a plan be set on ways to target these constituents in the upcoming months. Katharine requested that council members email her a list of any key constituents they might already have in mind.

C. Improving Care at the End of Life

Katharine presented the cost sub-committee meeting discussion on end of life care and stated that the information and suggestions made on end of life care were highly considered by the cost committee. She brings the main topics of discussion around advance directives and proxies to the Council for feedback and suggestions.

The Council discussed issues including what is meant by end of life care; what is meant by quality of care at the end of life; the extent to which advance directives might improve patients’ and families’ experience with care at the end of life; the role of physician order

forms; and the need to encourage discussion of end of life care among families and between families and care providers.

The Council agreed that it needed more information on End of Life Care. The Chair suggested asking a local researcher to develop a white paper on end of life care for the Council. The Council noted that the Massachusetts End of Life Commission would be a great resource, but it does not have any funding. The Council expressed interest in helping the Commission to get funding and asked that Katharine keep a list of recommendations we have for the legislature compiled for future submission.

Jim Conway said that the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the American Hospital Association are planning to give grants to 10 states to identify best practices in end of life care. The Massachusetts Hospital Association is applying to be one of the 10 pilot states.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12.